

WASHINGTON POST

Louisville Newspaper Hired Suspected CIA Agent in '64

LOUISVILLE, March 25 (AP) — A man hired as a reporter by The Louisville Courier-Journal in 1964 may have been a Central Intelligence Agency undercover agent, the newspaper said today.

Robert H. Campbell, now living in McLean, Va., was named by the newspaper as the man it says was hired as a reporter in December, 1964, and worked there until March, 1965.

Its investigation indicated Campbell apparently has been a CIA agent since September, 1959, the newspaper said.

The Courier-Journal said Campbell was hired by then Courier-Journal and Louisville Times executive editor Norman E. Isaacs, now president-publisher of the Wilmington, Del., News and Journal.

Former Courier-Journal managing editor Benjamin F. Reeves told the paper that Isaacs told him in 1964 that Campbell was hired at the request of the CIA. Isaacs has denied any knowledge of an alleged CIA connection in his hiring of Campbell. Reeves is now on the staff of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

According to the Courier-Journal investigation, Isaacs received a letter, dated Oct. 23, 1964, from Herman Bulford, of Economic News Distributors, a Dallas-based firm.

The letter identified Campbell as one of its "junior feature writers" and a linguist who had spent three years in Kenya studying the country's language and history.

The newspaper's investigation concluded that the Economic News Distributors was a phony operation.

Bulford's letter said Campbell had previous experience in newspaper work and had demonstrated "distinct writing ability."

Persons who worked with Campbell at the newspaper recalled that he had little or no talent for writing, and could barely type.

The Courier-Journal quoted CIA spokesman Angus Thuermer as saying, "We just can't say anything about allegations of newsmen doing this, that or the other."

A reporter for the newspaper attempted to contact Campbell at his Virginia home, but Campbell's wife answered the door and refused to allow the reporter to talk with her husband.

When asked if her husband was a CIA agent, Mrs. Campbell said "If he was, I wouldn't tell it to you."

[In a telephone interview with The Washington Post, Reeves reaffirmed that Isaacs told him of agreeing to take on Campbell for a temporary job at the request of "some old friend of his who was with the CIA." Reeves said the CIA official was supposed to have told Isaacs "he wanted to send this young fellow down to get him a little knowledge of newspapering."]

[It was clearly understood, at least by me, that he was going to be there just a very short time," Reeves stated. He said he turned Campbell over to the city desk as a beginning, general assignment reporter on a \$125-a-week salary.

[Isaacs said he had little comment except to deny Reeves' account. Isaacs said that as he recalled it, Campbell was simply an aspiring young reporter hired for a probationary term but "who didn't work out."]

"I heard that around the time, the kid was supposed to have been bragging about his connections as a cloak-and-dagger man in a Courier-Journal-frequented bar," Isaacs in a brief telephone interview. "I took it in a lighthearted way then and I take it in a lighthearted way now."]